

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Please amend the above-referenced application as follows:

Please amend the Title as follows:

UNIVERSAL CONNECTOR SLEEVE AND METHOD FOR SECURING FLEXIBLE  
TUBE ASSEMBLIES.

Please amend the Technical Field as follows:

The present invention relates generally to a connector sleeve configured to secure flexible tube assemblies, and more particularly, to an apparatus and method for securing medical tube junctions.

Please amend the Summary of the Invention as follows:

A connector sleeve comprises a housing having a first portion and a second portion. The first portion includes an aperture configured to receive a tubing assembly junction and a restrictor that intrudes from the housing. The restrictor is configured to contact a first end of the tubing assembly junction. The second portion includes a tapered inner surface with a slot substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the sleeve. The second portion is configured to closely surround and contact a second end of the tubing assembly junction.

~~In light of the foregoing, a universal connector is introduced. The universal connector can be realized with a housing having an inlet port, an outlet port, and a tapered inner surface; and a restrictor fixedly attached to the housing, the restrictor configured to engage a second end of the tubing junction. When the universal connector is configured with a housing that closely contacts the external surface of a stretched tubing section that overlaps the external surface of the coupler, the tubing assembly is prevented from disengaging. In some exemplar embodiments, the universal connector is configured with a slot for receiving a tubing coupler.~~

~~The universal connector may be realized in methods for securely coupling flexible tubing sections associated in a tubing assembly. A preferred method includes the steps of: (1) selecting an appropriately configured universal connector; (2) inserting a first end of a tubing junction within the housing; and (3) axially rotating a second end of the tubing junction until the tubing assembly junction is substantially aligned with the longitudinal axis of the connector.~~

Variations of the universal connector sleeve ~~apparatus, methods, and features~~ herein presented will be or become apparent to one with skill in the art upon examination of the following drawings and detailed description. All variations are included within the scope of the universal connector sleeve as described by the accompanying claims.

Please amend the second paragraph on page 10 of the application as follows:

Furthermore, the outlet port 130 of the universal connector 100 formed by the housing 120 is configured such that it substantially surrounds the outer diameter of the second section of tubing 30, 46 of FIGs. 1 and 3. In this way, the housing 120 in addition to receiving and engaging the tubing assemblies 10, 40 (FIGs. 1 and 3) also serves to align the tubing assemblies with the longitudinal axis of the universal connector 100. Consequently, tubing assemblies 10, 40 are secured from failing due to disengagement from tension forces in the fluid flow direction applied by the patient and/or external sources. Tubing assemblies 10, 40 are also secured from failing due to disengagement from axial forces that may be applied to the various components of the assemblies.

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

A universal connector sleeve includes a housing defined by a first portion and a second portion. The first portion includes an aperture that receives a tubing assembly junction and a restrictor. The restrictor contacts a first end of the tubing assembly junction. The second portion includes a tapered inner surface with a slot substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the sleeve. The second portion closely surrounds and contacts a second end of the tubing assembly junction. ~~An universal connector is disclosed. The universal connector can be realized with a housing having an inlet port, an outlet port, and a tapered inner surface; and a restrictor fixedly attached to the housing. In some exemplar embodiments, the universal connector is configured with a slot for receiving a tubing coupler. The universal connector may be realized in methods for securely coupling flexible tubing sections associated in a tubing assembly. A preferred method includes the steps of: (1) selecting an appropriately configured universal connector; (2) inserting a first end of a tubing junction within the housing; and (3) axially rotating a second end~~

~~of the tubing junction until the tubing assembly junction is substantially aligned with the longitudinal axis of the connector.~~